

Dr. Steve Bishop

Bishop steers Southwest

Dr. Steve Bishop's legacy of superior leadership on campus continued, and he remained a major influence in the success of the projects and activities on campus in his eighth year as president. He welcomed several new employees including faculty, professional staff, and coaches, including the new football coach Tim Stowers. He was named the Vice-Chairman of the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges, continued to serve on the State Workforce Investment Board, and kept his position as the Chair and President Liaison for Phi Theta Kappa, which was an international Honor Society for community college students, and worked closely with the SMCC Alumni Association and the SMCC Foundation. Bishop was also named a Mississippi Community College Foundation Board Member.

Activity reigned supreme throughout the year on campus, and over 2,000 local events and meetings were hosted on campus. The Bear Tracker Fundraising activities such as the Annual Princess Ball and the Super Hero Bash were hosted, and the Stage Band Show rocked the crowds with its highly successful bi-annual performance. Dr. Bishop guided infrastructure improvements aimed at improving the quality of life for all staff and students, and ensured the continued success of the school. Many long-term projects were completed due to his dedication including the Water Tower Renovation, the baseball stadium lighting project, and electrical infrastructure upgrades to the Fine Arts Hurst Auditorium. There were new additions to the campus such as a new lighted entrance sign on the east side of campus, a new roof on the activities building, and the installation of handicap accessible grand stands on the home side football stadium. The campus landscaping was maintained and upgraded throughout the year as well.

Under Dr. Bishop's leadership, Southwest continued to succeed both academically and athletically. The school received an unqualified financial audit, and a new Fine Arts Photography course taught by Pulitzer Prize winner Ted Jackson was added to the curriculum. The A.D.N. was recognized as the Best Nursing Program among community colleges and universities in the state of Mississippi. The Collegiate DECA International Career Development competition took place in Washington, D.C., and the Pine Burr and Whispering Pines both achieved first place overall in competition. None of this could have been accomplished had it not been for the diligent efforts of Dr. Bishop.

Southwest received the recognition as a "Great College to Work For" for the second time by The Chronicle of Higher Education. The Great Colleges to Work For survey is one of the largest and most comprehensive workplace studies in higher education. The results, released in The Chronicle's 11th annual report on The Academic Workplace, were based on a survey of 253 schools. Of these 253 institutions, only 84 earned this achievement. Dr. Bishop's contributions to Southwest Mississippi Community College resulted in improved performance and quality of life across the campus, made incredible progress on the institution's goals, and aided students in becoming contributing members of the community.

by Madison VanNess and Eva-Marie Luter



above: Dr. Bishop sings at the Christmas Stage Band Show with Branson Blanton; above right: During the first pep rally, Dr. Bishop welcomes students to the campus; opposite page: Dr. Bishop stands with his family: Ruth, Eleanor, Arthur, his wife Melanie, and Katherine.



